

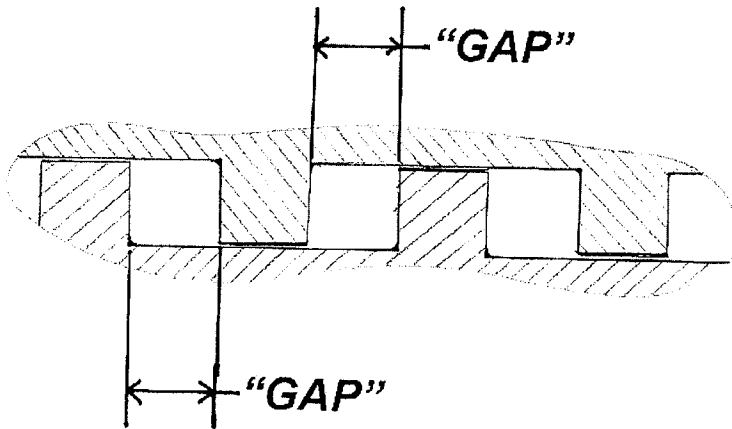
**REMARKS**

Claims 1-5, 8, 12-17, and 21-22 are pending. Claims 1, 12, and 22 are currently amended. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for pointing out that Applicants' claims recited "ribs formed on at least one side," rather than the intended "ribs formed on one side." Applicants' claims have been amended accordingly. No new matter has been added.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants wish to clarify their position with regard to patentability of the pending claims.

With regard to the Examiner's remarks concerning the age of references relied upon in the Office Action, Applicants agree that the relative age of references is of little relevance to the inquiry of patentability. Applicants submit that the previous response intended, but perhaps failed, to articulate an expression of the long-felt need that led to Applicants' invention of the subject matter of the present claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully withdraw the position stated in the previous response and simply assert that the filtration industry has long faced the need to incorporate greater filter surface area into smaller volumes, and that Applicants disclose and claim a patentable new means for addressing this long-felt need.

Further, in past communications, Applicants have asserted that materials have an "ability" or a "capability" of nesting. Applicants wish to clarify that in each embodiment claimed by Applicants, the materials *are necessarily nested*. Applicants' specification discloses that "[p]referably, the second downstream support layer is fabricated from an extruded apertured film material, and preferably an apertured film material having rib(s) formed on one side. *The rib(s) advantageously maintain a gap* when the pleated filtration media is folded onto itself, thereby greatly improving lateral fluid flow." (Applicants' specification, page 6, lines 9-12) (emphasis added). The "gap" Applicants refer to cannot be maintained unless the pleated filtration media, when folded onto itself, is nested (see sketch, below).



As shown in the sketch, the gap is the spacing between adjacent ribs of the opposing surfaces formed when the filtration media is folded onto itself. Applicants respectfully submit that a nesting configuration is inherent to the present claims, for without it, Applicants' "gap" would be an absent feature as ribs of opposing surfaces would not be adjacent one another in a juxtaposed (i.e., side-by-side) relationship.

**I. Claims 1-4, 12-14, 16-17, and 21-22 are Not Obvious over Miller et al. in view of Rasmussen**

Claims 1-4, 12-14, 16-17, and 21-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Miller et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,552,048) in view of Rasmussen (U.S. Pat. No. 3,954,933). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection because neither Miller et al. nor Rasmussen teach or suggest the use of a second downstream support layer comprising an extruded apertured film having ribs formed on one side, wherein the ribs maintain a gap when the filtration media is folded onto itself, as recited in Applicants' claims.

As discussed above, a nesting configuration is inherent to the present claims, for without it, the claimed "gap" would be an absent feature. In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, Miller et al. report the use of an aligned (non-nested) bead configuration where "[w]ithin each pleat, beads 25 are joined to themselves and serve as spacers to define a flow channel" (Miller, col. 6, lines 11-13). The spacers reported by Miller et al. simply maintain the flow channel that is already present before the beads are joined to themselves. The beads reported by Miller et al. are not juxtaposed and adjacent one another in a nesting relationship that can form a gap.

Accordingly, Miller et al. fail to teach or suggest the use of a second downstream support layer comprising an extruded apertured film having ribs formed on one side, wherein the ribs maintain a gap when the filtration media is folded onto itself, as recited in Applicants' claims.

The teachings of Rasmussen do not make up for Miller et al. failure to teach or suggest a gap as presently claimed. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1-4, 12-14, 16-17, and 21-22 as being obvious in view of the combination of Miller et al. and Rasmussen should be withdrawn.

## **II. Claims 5, 8, and 15 are Not Obvious over Miller et al. in view of Kawano et al.**

Claims 5, 8, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Miller et al. in view of Kawano et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,808,553). For at least the following reasons, the rejection is unwarranted and should be withdrawn. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection because neither Miller et al. nor Kawano et al. teach or suggest the use of a second downstream support layer comprising an extruded apertured film having ribs formed on one side, wherein the ribs maintain a gap when the filtration media is folded onto itself, as recited in Applicants' claims.

As discussed above, Miller et al. fail to teach or suggest the use of a second downstream support layer comprising an extruded apertured film having ribs formed on one side, wherein the ribs maintain a gap when the filtration media is folded onto itself, as recited in Applicants' claims. The teachings of Kawano et al. do not make up for Miller et al. failure to teach or suggest a gap as presently claimed. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 5, 8, and 15 as being obvious in view of the combination of Miller et al. and Kawano et al. should be withdrawn.

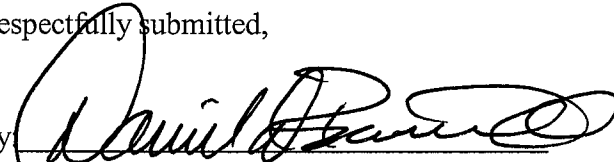
### III. Conclusion

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative with any questions concerning Applicants' application.

Respectfully submitted,

November 19, 2007  
Date

By

  
Daniel D. Biesterveld, Reg. No.: 45,898  
Telephone No.: 203-238-8737

Office of Intellectual Property Counsel  
3M Innovative Properties Company  
Facsimile No.: 651-736-3833